

# NAGE R12-135, serving EPA-ORD-Las Vegas, Nevada

## Voluntary Anonymous Survey Results:

### Early-Out Options (VERA\VSIP) and Options for Directed Relocation

The results of our EPA ORD-Las Vegas survey (May 25 to June 5, 2017) are summarized below. We had a 90% response rate (36 responses); all 40 ORD staff located in Las Vegas received the survey via email. Thank you to all who responded, participated in discussions, and asked questions!

The results are presented as counts (Table 1), as percentages (Table 2), a stacked bar graph (Figure 1), and a list of comments for each question. If you need to know the specifics of the questions, they are listed at the top of each set of comments.

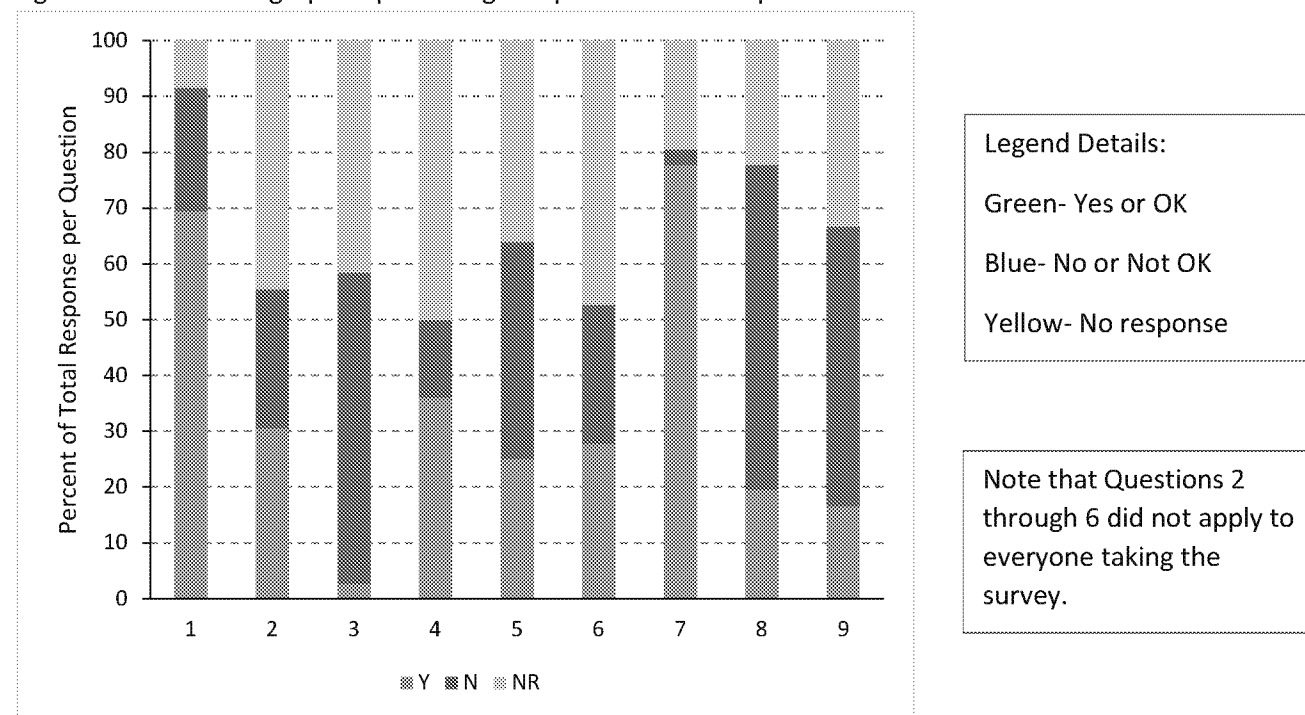
**Table 1. Number of responses for each question.**

	Yes or OK	No or Not OK	No Response	Total Responses
Question	Y	N	NR	row_tot
1	25	8	3	36
2	11	9	16	36
3	1	20	15	36
4	13	5	18	36
5	9	14	13	36
6	10	9	17	36
7	28	1	7	36
8	7	21	8	36
9	6	18	12	36

**Table 2. Percentage of responses for each question.**

	Yes or OK	No or Not OK	No Response	Total Responses
Question	Y	N	NR	row_tot
1	69	22	8	100
2	31	25	44	100
3	3	56	42	100
4	36	14	50	100
5	25	39	36	100
6	28	25	47	100
7	78	3	19	100
8	19	58	22	100
9	17	50	33	100

**Figure 1. Stacked bar graph of percentage responses for each question.**



***Q1- Are you eligible for a VERA\VSIP offer based on the above OPM criteria? Y or N Comment:***

- But just because I am eligible does not mean that this fits into my long term plan which I have been following for several years now.
- I'm already eligible for retirement.
- Maybe
- if #5
- Too young
- Yes, I'm eligible.
- I've been with EPA 20 years so I am not eligible.

***Q2- Would you prefer and accept the VERA\VSIP offer at the end of the calendar (leave) year (January 6, 2018, or before)? Y or N Comment:***

- Preferable, close to 100% on this
- The end of the calendar year (Dec 31 for FERS and Jan 3 for CSRS) is preferable for taxes. An early date in 2018 (March 3 or 31) would be preferable to Sept 30, 2017
- This choice would be ideal.
- Not ready to retire and have not secured job yet outside of the Agency that would be equivalent or above current position.
- Maybe
- End of year is better.
- Neither as I plan to work until my MRA
- Loose too much in additional taxes leaving before 2018.
- N/A- Don't intend to accept.
- N/A
- This is a possibility; depends on the mortgage balance and how much my retirement check would be.
- At end of leave year.

***Q3- Would you prefer and accept a VERA\VSIP offer at the end of the 2017 fiscal year (September 30, 2017)? Y or N Comment:***

- Not preferred, may accept depending on how proposed budget goes forth.
- I might accept, but would prefer a more a date where taxes on the VSIP were in the next calendar year.
- I prefer end of calendar year, but will take this since it is more of a sure thing.
- Not ready to retire and have not secured job yet outside of the Agency that would be equivalent or above current position.
- FY17 option is a bad deal on all accounts.
- Maybe
- NA, however, were I going to take a VERA, I would prefer the end of 2017.
- N/A- Don't intend to accept.
- N/A
- Today--no. After the markup--we'll see.

***Q4- Is it your preference NOT to accept a VERA\VSIP offer for either date? Y or N Comment:***

- Depends on how conditions evolve
- I would accept a buyout, but Sept 30, 2017 is not a preferred date.
- I will take the early out if offered to me.
- Not ready to retire and have not secured job yet outside of the Agency that would be equivalent or above current position.
- Leave year date or no.
- Not sure yet.
- Buyout cash incentive offer too little to make any significant contribution to retirement capability.
- Maybe
- Keep working...
- We have important work to do, and to finish. This year is too soon.

- I will not be accepting a VERA.
- Depends on too many issues to say yes or no at this time.
- I would like to work through FY20-ish
- N/A
- See comment under 2)
- Yes that is not my preference. I prefer to wait at least about three more years.

**Q5- If you are offered moving expenses to relocate to another ORD facility by the end of FY18 (September 30, 2018), will you move? Y or N Comment:**

- I work in the office therefore, I do not fall under moving other than to a new Las Vegas location.
  - probably not, but I have not ruled it out
- If that is the only way to keep my job until I turn 62, then Yes.
- No interest in relocating
- Possibly, though I am not currently being considered for relocation. My decision depends more heavily on the broader direction and alignment of ORD under the current administration.
- Maybe
- Not applicable
- No reason to move if working in office or from home (telework).
- I probably would and retire within 4 years of the move when I reach my MRA, unless of course the proposed FERS retirement changes become law and I lose my social security offset and annual COLAs.
- Not Sure, it will depends on many issues.
- I am not on the list of 12.
- Undecided
- I plan to move, but would prefer to visit both options prior if possible. If not I would guess RTP is the choice.
- N/A
- yes
- NEVER to Cincinnati! Only RTP--which this doesn't really affect me at the moment--right?
- N/A
- Have not been offered this; I am supposedly moving to La Plaza.
- I do not have a lab so I am not planning on moving or being offered
- NA to me
- Family reasons

**Q6- If instead of relocating, you could work a short (less than one year) extended period in Las Vegas, completing journal articles, or wrapping up your work, and then retire, would that work for you? Y or N Comment:**

- Does not apply
- May require slightly longer, depends when clock starts ticking
- If what is meant by extended period is after the end of FY18 than definitely. March-April 2019 fits in with my long term plan for leaving EPA.
- This option is very ideal for my situation.
- Doesn't apply to me, I will retire before then.
- NA
- Las Vegas is too vulnerable for a RIF. Little to no opportunity to obtain another position in the local commuting area.
- Maybe
- Not applicable
- Need more than one year.
- This isn't applicable to me as I need to work until 2022 to reach my MRA.
- Maybe
- Not applicable/not on list of 12. I would like to see people on list of 12 receive more than a year to finish up their work if that makes sense from a StRAP product point of view. I would like to see new (non-lab-related) collaborations that result in StRAP journal articles also count towards extending tenure in LV.
- Possibly
- My career is too young

- N/A
- N/A--I would still not be retirement eligible.....
- N/A
- Not applicable
- Not applicable
- NA to me
- Not applicable

***Q7- What do you think about this use of the survey to share information and develop a snapshot of what your colleagues are thinking? OK or Not OK Comment:***

- Good idea. People won't worry that expressing their true thoughts will hurt them.
- Wish it was done earlier, to give time for management to act upon the modification of the early out deadline
- Great, should have been done in March
- Okay and needed.
- This is a personal and family (if applicable) decision. It is none of my business to know what my colleagues are thinking, nor do I want them to know what I am thinking. This survey is completely inappropriate.
- More feedback and input is always better to make informed decisions.
- This is the only way to get this kind of information that I can see, so good!
- Thanks.
- Hopefully the information will be effective for those being forced to move.
- I like it; smartest thing done to date with this totally FUBAR situation.
- I'm on the fence. On one hand I think it's an intrusion on the other I'd like to know what my colleagues are planning.
- No comment

***Q8- Is the Program of Requirements released this week describing the new office space for EPA staff starting in 2020, factoring into your thinking? Y or N Comment:***

- No comment
- we've known for awhile that moving into another space would be small and afford less privacy
- Cubicle farms are proven to be ineffective at increasing worker productivity or morale. They are a failed business experiment. Why do we insist on treating people like cogs instead of human beings because it saves you a dollar?
- Please don't waste our time with meaningless surveys
- But not enough to retire.
- No, it is not.
- No idea
- I said no because I need to continue working for financial reasons. However in the next phase of planning, it is essential to get the staff who will be assigned to the new space involved in the space decision-making process, maybe by offering some options. For their creativity and buy-in if nothing else.
- N/A
- N/A-- I have not seen that
- Haven't seen this; please send to me.

***Q9- Any other topics? Y or N Comment:***

- We need to keep expressing our concerns to NERL and not look like we have rolled over and are playing dead. NERL needs to be kept accountable for disrupting people's lives. Quit handing us platitudes. NERL is screwing around with people's retirement money. Would they like it? NO!!
- Thank you
- \$25,000 VSIP is not in line with the inflation rates over the last several years. Other Agencies have increased their VSIP to \$40,000 to make the offer to separate more effective for both parties. With the President's Budget forecasting a reduction of 3800 FTE; this should be considered to maximize the opportunities as well as the Agency goals. \_Discussions of a planned formal complaint are on the horizon regarding the square footage for the new office space at La Plaza (starting in 2018). The ORD Program of Requirements, released this week, state that ORD employees will be given 70 square feet, while all other EPA, non-ORD, employee's, in the same complex are enjoying two-four times greater working space. Current tenants at La Plaza have been directed to "spread-out" in an effort to appear that they don't have any free space for ORD tenants to occupy.
- No comments!
- We should only need to move one time if staying in Las Vegas. Get the new contract before any moves.
- The proposed changes to the federal employee benefits included in the 2018 budget are huge issues.
- If they cut retirement Cola that would impact when to retire. Loosing or reducing cola after retirement could make living on retirement very difficult when they also propose cutting the portion of the payment the Government make toward out health care cost (while working and during retirement). These changes greatly reduce the real net take home pay.
- I absolutely do not want glass cubicle walls like they have in HR (La Plaza Building A). I want as much privacy as possible.  
b) Also I prefer higher, not lower cubicle walls because that makes it quieter. That said, I will probably telework more than I do now. c) We also will probably need wireless headsets for participating in conference calls, because speaker phones will make too much noise.
- I wish that we would receive less fluff and more practical info. That is the most disheartening...
- Not at this time
- None!
- People forget to include the "outliers" on emails and meeting announcements. By outliers I mean, OARS, Forest Service, and others not part of NERL. See 8) above